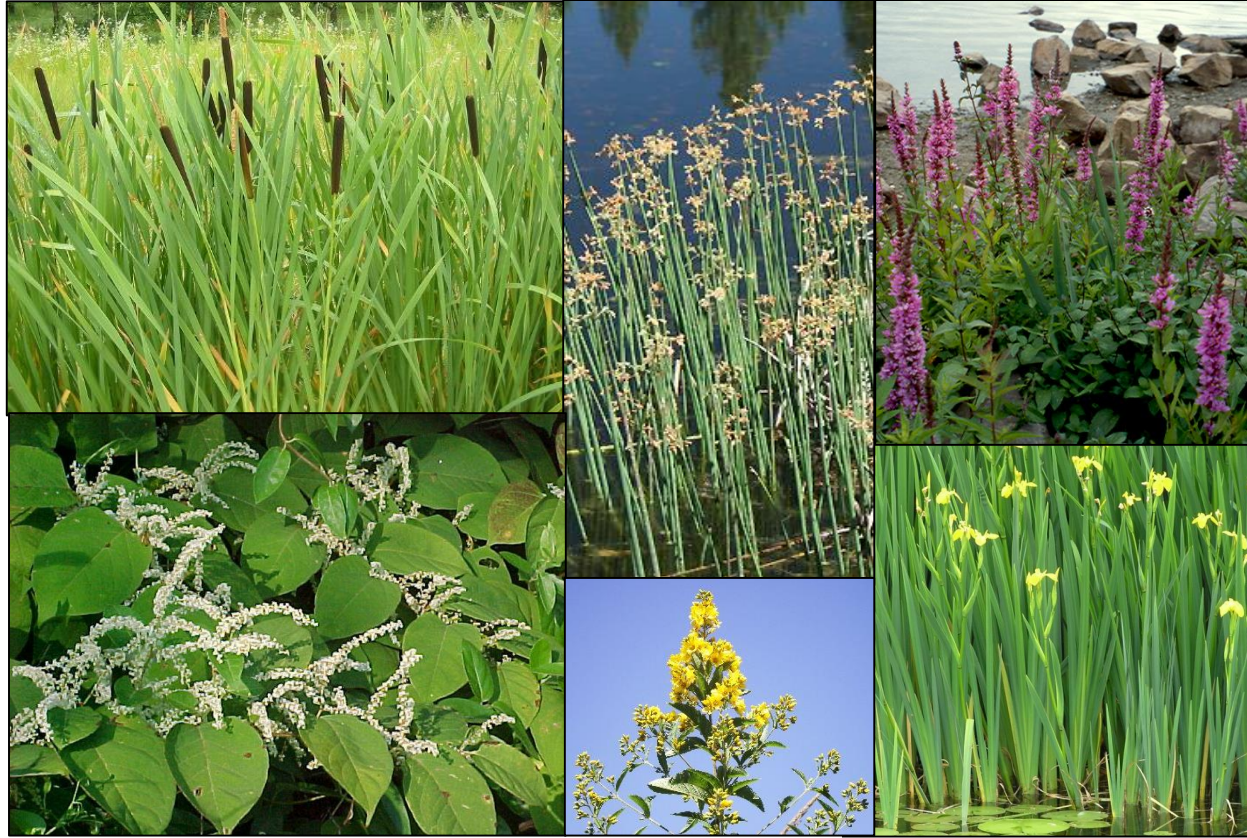


# Aquatic Plant Identification Guide

## *Shoreline Plants*

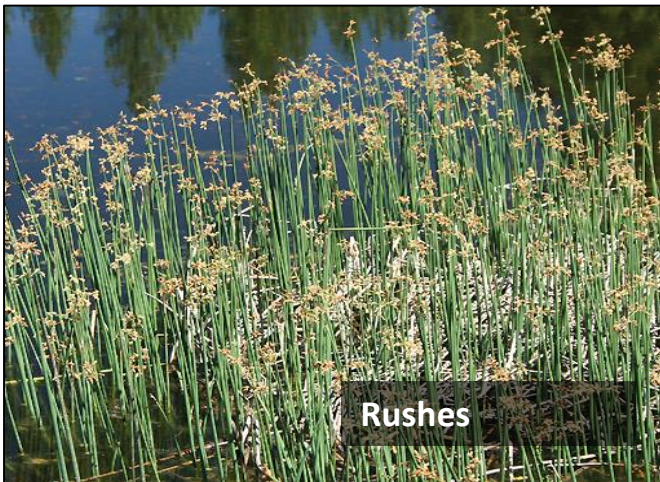


Snohomish County Surface Water Management  
Lakes Management Program  
425-388-3204  
[lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org)  
[www.lakes.surfacewater.info](http://www.lakes.surfacewater.info)

# Native Shoreline Plants



- Part of a healthy lake system; benefit people and wildlife
- Good for wildlife – provide food and cover for birds, amphibians, turtles, and insects.
- Prevent geese from accessing lawns and discourages year-round residency
- Helps prevent shoreline erosion



Common native shoreline plants in Snohomish County are:

- Bulrushes
- Rushes
- Cattail



# Invasive Shoreline Plants



- Grow densely, with few natural enemies; adaptable
- Out-competes & displaces native plants
- Once established - high cost to control



Shoreline invasive plants in Snohomish County include:

- Yellow-flag iris
- Japanese knotweed
- Purple loosestrife
- Garden loosestrife
- Grass-leaved arrowhead



# Cattail

*Typha latifolia*



- Commonly found on lake edges and in marsh areas
- Tall, thick stems with brown “tail” at top
- Leaves group at base and separate as they grow taller
- Provides water filtration and habitat for wildlife

# Yellow flag Iris

*Iris pseudacorus*



- Wetland/lake edge plant with showy yellow flowers
- Forms thick patches along the shore
- Leaves grow in flat fan shape, flowers on a separate stalk
- Crowds out native plants/can irritate skin when pulled
- Learn about [control options](#)
  - Report new locations to [lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org)



# Japanese knotweed

*Polygonum cuspidatum*



- Wetland/lake edge plant that is very aggressive
- Forms thick stands and degrades wildlife habitat
- Can grow up to 13 feet tall
- Spreads by fragments/aggressive rhizomes
- Control is required within Snohomish County
  - Learn about control options on the [Snohomish County](#) and the [Washington State Noxious Weed Board](#) websites
  - Report new locations to [lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org)



# Grass-leaved arrowhead

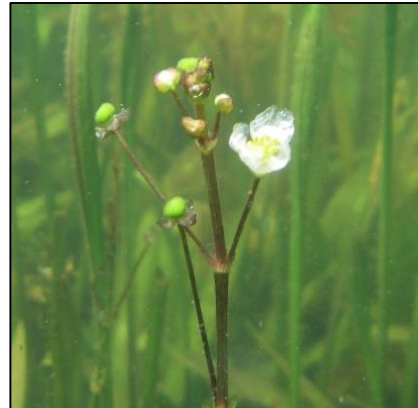
*Sagittaria graminea*



- Plants can be fully or partially underwater
- Long narrow leaves all grow from one base
- White flowers grow on a long flower stem
- Rapidly spreads excluding all other plants
- Only found in two counties in WA
- Can be hand-pulled for removal

Lakes in Snohomish County with known  
Grass-leaved arrowhead infestations:

- Echo Lake
- Lake Loma
- Lake Roesiger
- Lake Serene





# Garden Loosestrife

*Lysimachia vulgaris*



- Can form thick barriers along lakeshores and wetlands
- Grows 3-6 feet tall; leaves are in whorls of 3 and are soft and hairy; Yellow flowers found at top of plant
- It has only been found on Lake Goodwin and in areas of the Snohomish River in Snohomish County
- Control is required within Snohomish County
  - Learn more about [control options](#)
  - Report new locations to [lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org)



# Purple loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*



- Found at many Snohomish County lakes
- Can form thick barriers on lakeshores and in wetlands
- Purple spikes of flowers that produce millions of seeds
- Square, flexible stems
- Control is required within Snohomish County
  - Learn more about [control options](#)
  - Report new locations to [lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org)





# Douglas Spiraea

*Spiraea douglasii*



- Purple cone shaped flowers on tall stalks
- Woody, rounded stems
- Grow in dense thickets along water sources
- Can be confused with purple loosestrife, but loosestrife stems are square and flexible



# Bulrush or Tule

*Scripus spp.*



- Tall, thin, round stems
- Between 1 – 3 meters tall
- Several species within our area
  - Two most common:

Hardstem bulrush  
*Scirpus acutus*



Small fruited bulrush  
*Scirpus microcarpus*





# Rushes & Sedges

*Juncus spp. & Carex spp.*



## Rush

- Short, bushy, round stems
- “rushes are round”



Vikimedia – Forest & Kim Starr



Vikimedia – James Lindsey at Ecology of Commanster

## Sedge

- Long, thin, grass-like, triangular stems
- “sedges have edges”



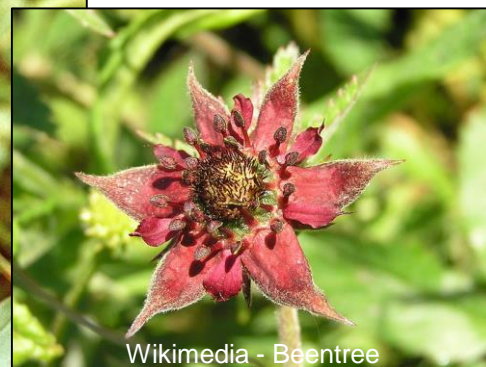


# Marsh Cinquefoil

*Potentilla palustris*



- Toothed leaves with five leaflets
- Reddish trailing stems and reddish-purple flowers
- Flowers produce a foul odor to attract flies for pollination
- Forms a sprawling mat along the water's edge





# Need more plant ID help?

- Shoreline plants are often hard to identify. We can help - email a photo to [lakes@snoco.org](mailto:lakes@snoco.org).
- Check out our LakeWise [shoreline planting guide](#) for more common native plants you might find on lake shorelines.
- See what plants have been found in your lake from the WA State Department of Ecology [Lake Database](#) or see their full aquatic plant [identification manual](#).

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